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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6666  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2222  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0101  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2304  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4267  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5973  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1464  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC  
RHMCSUU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHB  
HHS FOR OGHA  
EAP/MTS - MCOPPOLA  
NEW DELHI FOR JEHRENDREICH  
BANGKOK FOR REO HOWARD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [EAIR](#) [CASC](#) [ECON](#) [SN](#)

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE: NO H1N1 CASES; NEW VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR  
MEXICAN PASSPORT HOLDERS

REF: SINGAPORE 401

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: There are no confirmed cases of H1N1 type A influenza in Singapore, but the Ministry of Health (MOH) raised its alert level on May 1 from yellow to orange, indicating a potentially greater risk of human-to-human transmission but without declaring a pandemic. The GOS has instituted visa requirements for Mexican citizens. Travelers of any nationality that have been to Mexico in the seven days prior to their arrival in Singapore will be quarantined for seven days. There are currently no mandatory quarantines planned for travelers arriving from affected states in the United States, but MOH has urged travelers to voluntarily isolate themselves for seven days following their arrival from those areas. In recent days MOH has held briefings for family physicians and the diplomatic community. MOH is also working to distribute personal protective equipment (e.g., masks and gowns) to doctors throughout the island. The GOS has installed thermal scanners at land border entry points and scanning continues at the airports and ferry terminals. Singapore has not imposed any bans on pork products. Post has issued two warden messages to keep the American public informed. Other organizations such as the American Club and American Chamber of Commerce have also issued notices related to H1N1. End Summary.

Still No H1N1 Cases; Tighter Controls in Place  
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2. (SBU) There are still no confirmed cases of H1N1 type A influenza in Singapore, but the Ministry of Health (MOH) raised its alert level from yellow to orange on May 1. The higher alert level indicates that the virus is becoming more transmissible among humans but still appears to require "close contact with an index case." A pandemic has not been declared. As a precautionary measure, the GOS has instituted visa requirements for Mexican passport holders entering Singapore, although Singapore does not have a visa issuing office in Mexico. All travelers that have been to Mexico in the seven days prior to their arrival in Singapore must be quarantined for seven days. Residents are allowed home quarantine and MOH will

check on their status by phone. Tourists will be placed in housing designated and paid for by the GOS. Any tourist who chooses not to be in quarantine will be given the option to return or continue on to a third country. MOH reported that two Singaporeans and one foreign resident of Singapore were issued the first quarantine orders May 4. Anyone found to be breaking a home quarantine order can be fined up to S\$10,000 (US\$6,666) or imprisoned for up to six months.

13. (SBU) There are no mandatory quarantines planned for travelers arriving from the United States, though the GOS has encouraged recent travelers from New York, Texas, California, Kansas, and Nova Scotia in Canada, to voluntarily isolate themselves and practice social distancing for seven days to ensure they are not infected. The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) is still not scanning transit passengers at the airport.

#### MOH Briefs Community Physicians

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14. (SBU) MOH continues to update the public through its Web site and local press, but it also hosted a briefing for approximately 500 family physicians on May 2. The Embassy's RMO attended. MOH reviewed best practices for monitoring and addressing suspected H1N1 cases, but an informal poll of the audience indicated that only 40 percent of the physicians had enough personal protective equipment (e.g., masks and disposable gowns) to last one week. MOH said it would work on distributing more supplies to local doctors. The lack of supplies among physicians suggests that MOH's move to a higher alert level may have outpaced what community healthcare providers could actually support. MOH has instructed all medical

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professionals to refer any suspected cases of H1N1 to one facility, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, where the Singapore Communicable Diseases Center is located. MOH has established a special ambulance fleet and emergency line for the public to call if they suspect they have H1N1 or flu-like symptoms. MOH contacts have indicated that testing at Tan Tock Seng for the H1N1 virus should take only a few hours so no patients should be held at the hospital for long periods unnecessarily.

#### MOH Briefs the Diplomatic Community

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15. (SBU) MOH briefed the diplomatic community on May 4, reiterating much of the information already made public. MFA hosted the briefing, which was led by Dr. Jeffrey Cutter, Senior Consultant to the Risk Analysis Branch of the Communicable Diseases Division. Cutter said that Singapore currently stockpiles approximately 1.15 million courses of Tamiflu, which is in line with preparations for an outbreak that would affect about 25 percent of the population, a proportion seen in past pandemics. (Note: Singapore's population is about 4.68 million. End note.) Singapore also warehouses the Tamiflu stockpile for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). During the question and answer session, Cutter referred questions regarding the ASEAN stockpile to the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta and did not answer questions about when and how the supply might be distributed to ASEAN members should the H1N1 outbreak escalate in Asia.

#### Thermal Scanning Now at Land Border Checkpoints

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16. (SBU) The GOS has extended thermal scanning beyond the airports and ferry terminals to include people entering Singapore at land border checkpoints by bus or train. Media reports indicated that the scanning requirement does not include people traveling in trucks, cars or motorcycles because it would not be logistically feasible. People found to have elevated temperatures will be examined by on-site healthcare professionals and referred to Tan Tock Seng Hospital if travel history and other health symptoms suggest they might be at risk for H1N1. Some GOS offices, such as the Maritime and Port Authority and Monetary Authority of Singapore, as well as institutions like the Asian Civilizations Museum, have set up their own temperature scanning stations and imposed travel

reporting requirements for visitors.

"Prepare on All Fronts" for Cases in Singapore

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17. (SBU) In an April 30 press conference, Minister for Health KHAW Boon Wan likened the effort to contain the H1N1 outbreak to a "global war." He called the H1N1 virus a "new enemy" that requires a different approach from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak that hit Singapore in 2003. Khaw noted that containing H1N1 is more challenging than SARS due to how it is transmitted, the longer incubation period of the virus and the fact that people can infect others without being symptomatic. Khaw said that some of the procedures used to contain SARS, such as quarantines and contact tracing, might not prove as effective against H1N1. However, he outlined the need for containment strategies to delay the arrival of the virus in Singapore, noting that much of the effort rests on residents and travelers to self-declare their prior travel and whether they have flu symptoms. Efforts to delay the virus help ensure that once it arrives, sufficient protections will be in place for the domestic population, Khaw added.

No Ban on Pork Imports

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18. (SBU) Singapore has not imposed bans on pork imports, but as a precaution the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is testing pork products from H1N1 affected areas (reftel). AVA has posted a "frequently asked questions" feature on their public Web site affirming that pork products are safe to consume and that people cannot acquire the H1N1 virus from eating properly handled and cooked pork.

Embassy Flu Working Group; Keeping Americans Informed

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19. (SBU) The Embassy's Influenza Working Group has met twice to review the current situation and tripwires. Post plans to continue to operate normally until there are confirmed cases of H1N1 in Singapore, though we are requesting that visitors and employees who feel unwell stay home and avoid coming into the Embassy. Post is redoubling its hygiene measures, especially in the high-traffic areas of the Embassy. We have issued two Warden Messages to update the American public. Separately, the American Club issued its own advisory for members, outlining the health and hygiene precautions published by MOH. The American Chamber of Commerce is hosting an H1N1 briefing for the business community on May 7.

SHIELDS